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Super Bowl Unity Summit brings Pro-Athletes Together Against Hate



New Orleans student athletes with organizers (left to right center of photo) Dillard University President, Dr. Monique Guillory, CEO Robert Kraft, Rapper Meek Mill, UNCF President Dr. Michael Lomax, CBS anchor Gayle King, ESPN Reporter Jess Sims, and Unity Dinner founder Dr. John Eaves.

Story and Photos by Aaliyah Brown
Data News Weekly Contributor

Over 100 student athletes across New Orleans universities came together for a Special Super Bowl Unity Summit that featured Rapper and Activist Meek Mill in conversation with close friend New England Patri-

ots CEO Robert Kraft. The summit spotlighted the efforts of Black and Jewish athletes in pro-sports to push back against hate both of their communities' face and in light of recent comments by Rapper Kanye West. "This is still, with all our faults, the greatest country in the world, and we're gonna make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to experience it," said Kraft, as

he addressed student athletes from Dillard University, Loyola University, Tulane University and Xavier University of Louisiana on Feb. 7, 2025, in Xavier's University Center ballroom. Kraft's Foundation brought together a panel of professional athletes spotlighting work that brings communities together. This included Brigham Young Uni-

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versity Quarterback Jake Retzlaff, who is the only Jewish Quarterback in college football, Super Bowl Champ and NFL Running Back Leonard Fournette, NFL Kicker Greg Joseph, who is Jewish, and Dearica Hamby the Los Angeles Sparks Forward in the WNBA. The group shared how racism and anti-Semitism affected them growing up and in their professional lives. They are now using their platforms as athletes to ensure all human beings are treated the same.

"We're just human beings who want to be loved, who want to be cared for, and who want to love others," said former WNBA Player and Basketball Hall-of-Famer Nancy Lieberman, who shared how support from the Black community and her lifelong friendship with Black athletes like Muhammad Ali is why she also fights to end racism as a Jewish woman in sports.

The Unity Summit was a Super Bowl version of Unity Dinners, a partnership with the United Negro College Fund and Hillel International, with support from Kraft's Foundation to Combat Anti-Semitism. Students engage in conversa-



Dillard University's women's basketball team meet WNBA forward Dearica Hamby.

tions on college campuses to better understand the challenges their communities face.

"One of the main and common denominators that we do this work, is over a meal. Whether it's Shabbat dinner ...or Sunday night din-

ner, food has always been a centerpiece of connection in both of our cultures," said Xavier student Aarini-Parms-Green, a Baton Rouge native, who spoke at the summit. Parms-Green co-founded the Still We R.O.S.E. Initiative with three of



NFL Champ and New Orleans Native Leonard Fournette and WNBA Hall of Famer Nancy Lieberman fist bump as they share stories about working to end hate.

her Xavier peers in 2022 to address mistrust between Black and Jewish communities. She has collaborated with the Unity Dinners Project which has taken place in across other HBCU college hubs.

"I noticed in Atlanta there is a large Black community and a large Jewish community, and both communities do a lot of good work but not necessarily together," said Dr. John Eaves, who leads the Unity Dinners, which originated in his

hometown Atlanta, Georgia. The goal of the dinners is to take a step closer to educating both communities on anti-Semitic and racial discrimination and putting a stop to it, Eaves said. Eaves discovered that being a Black and Jewish man there are many similarities within the inequalities both groups have experienced. The dinners break down stereotypes, so that young people are not misjudged simply because of who they are.

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Super Bowl Parties in New Orleans at Bertha's Place and Element 79

Photos and Story
by Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The Super Bowl 2025 watch parties at Bertha's Place and Element 79 NOLA were enjoyable as the Eagles faced off against the Chiefs. Guests enjoyed a lively atmosphere filled with delicious food and refreshing drinks while cheering for their favorite team. Friends gathered in team colors, celebrating every touchdown and play. The excitement was infectious, making it a memorable Sunday filled with camaraderie, great bites, and the vibrant spirit of football in New Orleans.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



Here are some companies that **NO LONGER SUPPORT** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

WHY ARE YOU STILL SUPPORTING THEM?

A growing number of prominent US companies have announced they have scaled back or eliminated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Their retreat from DEI began after a June 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action in college admissions and accelerated after President Donald Trump's executive orders against all federal diversity initiatives.

Now longstanding programs to improve the hiring and promotion of African Americans and other minority workers in corporate America are now under serious threat.

The attack on diversity has been swift. After taking office on Jan. 20, President Trump issued a series of executive orders aimed at dismantling Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs across the federal government and the private sector. The attack on diversity is bad for a multi-ethnic country and bad for business which needs a diverse workforce. DEI programs seek to ensure fairer representation for groups historically marginalized such as African Americans, women, LGBTQ+ community members, and disabled people.

Diversity helps businesses by boosting innovation, expanding talent pools, and enhancing brand reputation, ultimately leading to improved financial performance and a more competitive edge. A diverse workforce opens

up opportunities to access a wider range of talent and skills, allowing businesses to tap into a broader pool of potential employees with unique experiences and expertise.

A diverse workforce can better understand and meet the needs of a diverse customer base. This allows businesses to tailor their products, services, and marketing strategies to resonate with a wider range of consumers.

However, if companies retreat from committing to the principles and practice of diversity in a multi-ethnic America, why should they be supported? The Philadelphia Tribune's response to the Trump administration's attacks on diversity and democracy begins with reporting the truth and holding those in power accountable.

More specifically, we ask you to strongly consider whether you should continue to spend your dollars with companies who have publicly announced their decision to retreat from diversity. Here's a look at some companies that have retreated from DEI:

Amazon

Amazon said it was halting some of its DEI programs, although it did not specify which ones. In a Dec. 16 memo to employees, Candi Castleberry, a senior human resources executive, said the company has been "winding down outdated programs and materials, and we're aiming to complete that by the end of 2024."

Target

The retailer said in January that it was ending a program it established to help Black employees build meaningful careers, improve the experience of Black shoppers and to promote Black-owned businesses.

Target, which operates nearly 2,000 stores nationwide and employs more than 400,000 people, said it also would bring to an end its diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, goals it previously set in three-year cycles.

The goals included hiring and promoting more women and members of racial minority groups, and recruiting more diverse suppliers, including businesses owned by people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, veterans and people with disabilities.

Meta

Meta Platforms Inc. the parent company of Facebook and Instagram said it was getting rid of its diversity, equity and inclusion program, which featured policies for hiring, training and choosing vendors.

McDonald's

Four years after launching a push for more diversity in its ranks, McDonald's said that it is ending some of its diversity practices, citing the U.S. Supreme Court decision that outlawed affirmative action in college admissions. McDonald's said on Jan. 6 that it will retire specific goals for achieving diversity at senior

leadership levels. It also intends to end a program that encourages its suppliers to develop diversity training and to increase the number of minority group members represented within their own leadership ranks.

Walmart

The world's largest retailer confirmed in November that it would not be renewing a five-year commitment for an equity racial center set up in 2020 after the police killing of George Floyd.

Ford

CEO Jim Farley sent a memo to the automaker's employees in August outlining changes to the company's DEI policies.

Lowe's

In August, Lowe's executive leadership said the company began "reviewing" its programs following the Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling and decided to combine its employee resource groups into one umbrella organization. Previously, the company had "individual groups representing diverse sections of our associate population."

John Deere

The farm equipment maker said in July that it will no longer sponsor "social or cultural awareness" events, and that it would audit all training materials "to ensure the absence of socially-motivated messages" in compliance with federal and local laws.

Tractor Supply

The retailer in June said it was ending an array of corporate diversity. Tractor Supply said it would be eliminating all of its DEI roles while retiring current DEI goals.

Unfortunately the list of companies retreating from diversity is growing. We will post this list in print, online and on social media when available. If new companies announce their withdrawal from diversity we will add them to the list of companies whose practices we are now calling into question.

We must speak out and send a loud and clear message to corporate America that a retreat from diversity means a withdrawal of our support and practices will be documented and provided to our readership.

New Orleans Musicians Shine During Super Bowl Pregame Show



During Super Bowl LIX, the world witnessed a vibrant showcase of New Orleans' musical heritage, with an all-star lineup of local legends and cultural icons taking center stage. Featured performers and voices included Terence Blanchard, Wayne "Wild Wayne" Benjamin, Percy "Master P" Miller, The Soul Rebels, the Southern University Marching Band and Dancing Dolls, Harry Connick Jr., The Pinettes, Big Freedia, Mardi Gras Indians, Ledisi, Trombone Shorty, and Jon Batiste—each contributing to an unforgettable celebration of the city's rich musical legacy.

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Millions tuned in as the Philadelphia Eagles claimed their second Super Bowl Championship on February 9, 2025, with a commanding 40-22 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs at Caesars Superdome in New Orleans, halting the Chiefs' quest for a historic third consecutive title.

For many in the Big Easy, however, the pregame show was just as much of a spectacle, celebrating New Orleans' rich musical legacy with a diverse lineup of the city's top artists. The half-time show further electrified the crowd, featuring a high-energy performance from Grammy Award-Winning Artist Kendrick Lamar, who captivated the audience with his signature stage presence.

New Orleans Musicians on the Big Stage During Pregame

National Anthem: New Orleans native and Grammy-Winning

Musician Jon Batiste delivered a soulful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," infusing it with jazz elements that paid homage to the city's musical heritage.

"America the Beautiful": Trombone Shorty and Lauren Daigle, both hailing from Louisiana, collaborated on a jazzy performance of "America the Beautiful." Their rendition was characterized by harmonious vocals and vibrant trombone solos, capturing the spirit of New Orleans.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing": Grammy-Winning Singer Ledisi performed a stirring version of the song often referred to as the Black National Anthem, accompanied by a choir, adding depth and resonance to the pregame ceremonies.

Kendrick Lamar Gives Amazing Half-time Show

The half-time show was headlined by Kendrick Lamar, marking a historic moment as he became the first solo hip-hop artist to lead this segment. His performance was a blend of dynamic artistry and cultural commentary.

Special Guests: Actor Samuel L. Jackson made a surprise appearance, portraying "Uncle Sam" and providing satirical interludes throughout the performance. Singer SZA joined Lamar for duets, including their hit "All the Stars." Additionally, Tennis Legend Serena Williams made a cameo, performing a dance that paid homage to her 2012 Olympic Victory Celebration.

Setlist Highlights: Lamar's setlist featured a mix of his well-known tracks and new material, including "Humble," "DNA," and his Grammy-Winning Diss Track "Not Like Us," which has been noted for its critique of fellow Rapper Drake. The performance was noted for its bold statements and strategic song selection, reaffirming Lamar's indelible presence in the music industry.

The combination of these performances created a memorable Super Bowl experience, celebrating both the local culture of New Orleans and the broader landscape of American music.

State & Local News

Love Riot Fest takes SuperBowl Action to the 9th Ward

Story and Photos
by Gabrielle Cromwell
Data News Weekly
Contributor

A day before he performed the National Anthem at Super Bowl LIX, Grammy-Award Winning Recording Artist Jon Batiste returned to the community for The Love Riot Festival welcoming visitors to the Desire-Area 9th Ward as part of city-wide events for the Super Bowl. The festival held at George Washington Carver High School's grounds on Feb. 8, 2025, brought out community partners, local food vendors, and community leaders united to show that New Orleans' greatness extends beyond Bourbon Street.

"I just wanted people to know that they have heroes in the 9th Ward," said Oscar Brown, the Director of Thrive New Orleans and one of the organizers of the event and 9th Ward native. "And we can put on a fest that people will be able



Big Chief Monk Boudreaux and Grammy-winning recording artist Jon Batiste perform at the Love Riot Festival stage on Feb. 8.

to enjoy. Both for the local community and also for outsiders," Brown said.

The festival, put on by non-profit He Gets Us, featured other special appearances and performances. Jon Batiste teamed up with Ledisi, another New Orleans native, who performed The Star-Spangled Banner at the festival and Lift Every



The Cool Cooperative students with artist Brandon "BMike" Odums at the Festival.

Voice and Sing at the Super Bowl on Sunday.

Other performances included George Washington Carver High School's Marching Band and Rapper Flava Flav appearing with his huge clock chain. Recent Grammy Award-Winning Artist Tarriona "Tank" Hall from Tank and the Bangas graced the stage, along with Gameoia Skip who led the crowd into various line dances, with New Orleans-style. Local artist and former George Washington Carver

High School student and teacher, Brandon "BMike" Odums, created unique pieces of art for the Love Riot Festival.

"It's serendipitous to [come back] to the space I started as an artist using spray paint, this very specific ground that you're standing on, coming back almost ten years later to create the artwork that's on the walls," Odums said.

Eternal Seeds, a nonprofit founded by BMike, was just one of the few community programs that part-

nered with the Love Riot Festival. Roots of Music, Operation Spark, Rethink NOLA, Giving Hope, Thrive New Orleans, Kids Sports Center, Positive Minds Positive Movement, and the Cool Cooperative were camped in tents to reach the community.

"It's important for the community to find out what kind of resources they have," said Alaina Dunn, a New Orleans East native and Program Director of the Cool Cooperative. "As a community partner we're a resource for the community. So, it's important for us to be here, so that the community learns that they have programs like this," Dunn said.

Dressed in memorabilia from the nonprofits and Love Riot Festival with New Orleans cuisine in their hands, guests and residents said they wanted to celebrate the City of New Orleans beyond the clichés of the French Quarter.

"We really just wanted this event to show love," Brown said.

NNPA Supports Selective Buying Campaign

National Newspaper Publishers Association

Washington, DC: The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), representing the Black Press of America, has announced the planning and implementation of a national public education and selective buying campaign across the nation in direct response to those corporate entities that have dismantled their respective Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) commitments, programs and staffing.

"We are the trusted voice of Black America, and we will not be silent or non-responsive to the rapid rise of renewed Jim Crow racist policies in corporate America," stated NNPA Chairman Bobby R. Henry Sr. "The Black Press of America continues to remain on the frontline keeping our families and communities informed and engaged on all the issues that impact our quality of life."



At a recent convening of NNPA member publishers and editors, a united resolve was reached that each member publication of the NNPA will begin a national public education campaign coupled with the release of research data on those American companies that are engaging in efforts to sanction racial injustice, inequitable policies, divisive leadership, and economic

apartheid in America.

"We note forthrightly that Black Americans spend \$2 trillion dollars annually as consumers of products and services throughout the United States," NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. emphasized. "We now must evaluate and realign to question why we continue to spend our money with companies that do

not respect us," Chavis continued. "This now must come to an end. These contradictions will not go unchallenged by 50 million Black Americans who have struggled for centuries to ensure equality, fairness and inclusion in our nation's democracy."

A selective buying campaign involves exercising the right to select what we spend our money on and who we spend our money with.

The following are some of the major American companies that have publicly retreated from Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

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